

One thing which helped the selection of a predominant ware was that only a specified article would make peace, atone for a wrong, compose a quarrel, or ransom a captive. Also various articles obtained such prestige, on account of age and the glory of ancestors, that the possession of them conferred authority and social importance on their owners. Such are porcelain jars in Borneo, bronze drums in Burma, bronze cannon in the East-Indian Archipelago. Many African chiefs stored up ivory tusks for social prestige long before the white men came and gave them value in world commerce.¹

149. Stone money in Melanesia. We must, however, turn our attention to Melanesia where the shell and stone money have been pushed to a most remarkable development, quite out of line with the rest of the Melanesian civilization. On the Solomon Islands there are some petty reef communities which occupy themselves solely with fishing and making shell-bead money.² On New Britain divarra is made by boring and stringing fathoms of shell money. A fathom is worth two shillings sterling, and two hundred and fifty fathoms coiled up together looks like a life buoy.³ In the northwestern Solomon Islands the currency consists of beasts' teeth of two kinds, — those of a kind of flying dog and of a kind of dolphin. Each tooth is bored at the root and they are strung on thin cords. These people also use the small disks of shell, five millimeters in diameter and from one to one and a half millimeters thick.⁴ The shell money of New Britain has very great influence on the lives of the people. It minimizes the

evil and fatality of war, in which every life and every wound must be paid for. It establishes the right of property. It makes the people frugal and industrious, and makes them a commercial people. To it may also be attributed their selfishness and ingratitude. " Its influence is supposed to extend even to the next life. There is not a custom connected with life or death in which this money does not play a great and leading part. . . . Take away their money and their secret societies sink at once into nothing, and most of their customs become nothing."⁵ Evidently the missionary testifies that the money stimulates commercialism-with all its good and ill. Coils of feathers which are spoken of as money are also reported from the New Hebrides and Santa Cruz. Feathers are attached with resin to the outside of coils, inside of which are charms, each possessing a protective property. This money is very rare and, if shown, may be handled only by the owner.⁶ Our information as to the commercial uses and effects of these island shell moneys is very imperfect. The money seems to be still on the stage of gems. It is used to buy steps of rank in the secret society, which cost pigs and money and mark social importance, which is, like

¹ Schurz, 13.

² Woodford, *Naturalist amongst Head-Hunters*, 16.

⁸ Cayley-Webster, *New Guinea and Cannibal Countries*^ 93.

Parkinson, *Ethnog. d. Nordwestl. Salomo ins.*,